

## STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-47-99

December 1, 1999

**Question:** “Is it the intention of Section 503.0 and Table 503 of the 1999 Connecticut State Building Code to apply to the area of *stories below grade*?”

**Answer:** Yes. When referencing height limitations, Table 503 and Section 503.3 specifically refer to stories above grade in either feet or stories above grade plane. When referencing area limitations, Table 503 and Section 506.0 simply refer to area in square feet per floor or story without regard to the location of the floor or story above or below grade plane. The definition of story, found at Section 502.1 is “That portion of a building included between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the floor or roof next above.” The commentary to the BOCA National Building Code/1996 regarding this definition contains the sentence “All levels that conform to this description are stories, including basements.” Absent the application of area limitations found in Table 503 to basements not considered a story above grade, the code would contain no mechanism to limit the area of such basements, thereby resulting in the construction of unlimited area below grade structures regardless of Use Group, construction classification, fire suppression, etc. Therefore, the area limitations found in Table 503 must be applied to stories below grade as well as stories above grade.

Keep in mind that the code contains additional safeguards for basements considered Underground Structures as determined by Section 405.0.